



CITY COUNCIL

CITY AND COUNTY OF HONOLULU
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From the Desk of Heidi Tsuneyoshi, Councilmember District 2, Honolulu City Council
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UA MAU KE EA O KA 'ĀINA I KA PONO

This morning we witnessed a very distressing situation for our people and our City. As the Chair of the Committee of Parks, Community Services and Intergovernmental Affairs I presided over a meeting held on May 29, 2019 to discuss the proposed Phase I Improvements at Waimanalo Bay Beach Park, more affectionately known as Sherwood Forest. Members of the community who were opposed to the project and the way the project proceeded came forward and followed all the proper protocols to make their voices and concerns heard. Additionally, after much discussion the Waimanalo Neighborhood Board passed a resolution in June urging the City to stop construction of the new athletic field immediately.

During the course of discussion it was determined that the work that was done to grub, grade and remove a large area of trees at the iconic Sherwood Forest did not even match up to the plans contained in the Waimanalo Bay Beach Park Master Plan which was approved in 2012. Questions were raised as to why the project would be moving forward and whether the City was able to switch the plans and move forward in a completely different direction without proper outreach to the general public and more importantly, area residents for their input. I share the same concerns and question whether or not the proper steps were followed in this process. For this reason I humbly ask that Mayor Caldwell and his Administration start the process over and work with the people of Waimanalo instead of effectively ignoring their concerns leading to the devastating situation we witnessed today.

As elected officials we ask that the people become more involved. We bemoan the lack of participation in civic activities reflected in low voter turnout. The situation that happened this morning at Sherwood Forest and many other situations going on in our City and State today are the reasons why people do not get involved. It is time to look in the mirror and ask that question to ourselves. The costs of moving forward on projects and initiatives that are widely opposed by the general public are getting too high. We need to truly assess the capital costs which are now into the billions of dollars for the various controversial projects being proposed as well as the detrimental costs to the fabric of our communities and impacts to future generations.

It is time for us to actually follow our State Motto and truly realize the importance of those words instead of just highlighting those meaningful words when the cameras are rolling or it seems like the popular thing to say at the time. The words that were first spoken by King Kamehameha the III on July 31, 1843 at Thomas Square. The words engraved on the corner stone of Honolulu Hale should be followed in every decision and action we as elected officials make.

In the short time I have been in office I have seen so many instances where government fails to abide by the rules we so strongly impose on the people. It is time for government to lead by example. Do things the right way and for the right reason so the people can start to trust in government again and have confidence that actions being taken are being done for the betterment of the people and our future.

I share this communication as an open letter to elected officials at all levels of government to strongly encourage us all to come together to adhere to our State Motto and the laws of the land so we can stand as examples of how to live out and ensure that the life of the land will be perpetuated in righteousness.

COUNCIL COM. 323

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